

**URBAN STREAMS RESTORATION PROGRAM – 2014 GUIDELINES AND PSP
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

Last updated: 10/20/2014

Q: How much funding is available in this solicitation cycle?

A: \$7.9 million is available from Proposition 84 and Proposition 13.

Q: What are the minimum and maximum amounts that will be awarded for individual proposals?

A: There is no minimum award; a maximum award of \$1 million can be awarded to each proposal.

Q: How many funding rounds will there be?

A: This is the last funding cycle for USRP. No further rounds of funding are scheduled at this time.

Q: When are proposals due and awards announced?

A: Proposals must be submitted through the online GRanTS system by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, January 7th 2015. Late applications will not be accepted. Awards are scheduled to be announced by May 2015.

Q: Are state agencies eligible to apply to the USRP?

A: State as well as federal agencies are not eligible to apply. Please see the guidelines for USRP applicant eligibility requirements. All proposals must have two sponsors: a local agency and a citizen's group.

Q: Are California Universities eligible for funding?

A: Please see the guidelines for USRP applicant eligibility requirements. These organizations are considered State agencies by the USRP and are therefore ineligible for grant funding. However, they can be involved as project partners.

Q: Does the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) process need to be completed prior to submitting a proposal and how does CEQA factor into proposal readiness?

A: CEQA does not need to be completed, though all projects must at minimum include a completed Initial Study Checklist as well as complete the Environmental Information Form supplemental attachment. Grant funds may be used to complete the environmental regulatory process, however funds for implementation will not be released until the process is complete.

Q: Are permits required to be completed prior to submitting a proposal? Will priority or preference points be given to proposals which already have permits in place?

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A: Final permits are not required prior to submission. The status of permits may be considered when evaluating factors such as due diligence and proposal readiness.

Q: Can you submit more than one proposal in one solicitation?

A: You may submit more than one proposal per solicitation.

Q: Will I get penalized for submitting more than one proposal?

A: Each proposal will be evaluated based on its own merit.

Q: I understand that grant programs typically reimburse (pay in arrears) for work already completed. Is this also true for property acquisitions?

A: Because of the large up-front monetary demands of a property acquisition, the grantee may request an advance prior to the actual land purchase. In such cases the USRP will advance the funds into a separate, interest-bearing escrow account on behalf of the grantee.

Q: According to the guidelines, a proposal involving the acquisition of property purchased in excess of Fair Market Value (FMV) would be considered ineligible for funding. Could it be considered an eligible project if the grantee found the means to cover the amount in excess of FMV?

A: The State is only allowed to fund acquisitions purchased at the approved Fair Market Value.

Q: The guidelines require prevailing wages to be paid for any public work projects financed with Proposition 84 grant funds. How is this requirement applicable to a city (the grantee) that plans on using its own Public Works Department to complete the project?

A: Labor Compliance Programs are required to be in place for all projects receiving funding by Proposition 84, and evidence of approval by the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) will be requested prior to project construction. Labor Code Section 1771 specifically exempts the prevailing wage requirement for work carried out by a public agency with its own staff or employees. For more information on "prevailing wage," refer to:

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/CaliforniaPrevailingWageLaws.pdf>

Q. Clarify what is considered an "urban" creek or stream.

A. As defined in Section 7048(e) of the California Water Code, an "urban creek" means "a creek which crosses built-up residential, commercial, or industrial property, or which crosses land where, in the near future, the land use will be residential, commercial, or industrial".

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Q. The definition of an urban stream specifically uses the phrase “a creek which crosses land...” Does this mean that projects on land “adjacent to” a creek but not addressing both sides of the bank would be considered ineligible?

A. Projects with creeks adjacent to or in the vicinity of land as specified in Exhibit 11 of the PSP are considered eligible for funding.

Q. Are project that restore channelized sections of stream eligible?

A. Projects that restore environmental and recreational benefits to streams previously channelized for flood control are eligible. However, a project that includes removing the concrete and re-establishing the natural stream meander and floodplain topography would be more competitive.

Q. What is the demand for grants under this program?

A. Very strong competition exists for grant funding under the USRP. The ratio of grant funding requested to what is awarded from the last cycle was 5:1.

Q: Are matching funds required and how does it impact scoring?

A: Matching funds are not required for the USRP, but projects with matching funds (monetary or in-kind funds) are generally more competitive. A portion of the total score for each project is based on matching funds. The PSP contains a break-down of the possible points for each project.

Q. Our organization will be co-sponsoring, not sponsoring the project. If our application is selected, will we also have to sign the contract? If so, why?

A. Both the sponsor and co-sponsor must sign the grant agreement. This is a requirement to confirm that both organizations are committed to implementing the project. The grant agreement does not specify how much work will be implemented by each sponsor. The division of work and responsibilities for the project are left to the sponsors to decide. Applications that show an active working relationship between both sponsors will be more competitive.

Q. Will the USRP fund mitigation work required for another project?

A. The USRP is unable to fund mitigation work for another project. However, proposed project work that goes “above and beyond” mitigation requirements is eligible.

Q. Will the USRP fund planning efforts?

A. Planning efforts for stream restoration projects can be funded if a significant portion of the project is devoted to implementation. The USRP will not fund “planning only” studies, each proposal must include an implementation component.

Q. Will the USRP fund stream restoration proposals to improve fish habitat? What about fish passage proposals?

A. The proposed project may include fish habitat improvement but must also address flooding or erosion management to be eligible. Projects containing fish passage

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improvements must also include a restoration component as well as address a flooding or erosion issue to be considered eligible.

Q. Can we use USRP funds to establish a stream or watershed education program for our schools and/or the general public?

A. We encourage projects that increase public awareness of stream restoration methods and watershed management as part of an overall project. However, the central focus of the project must address flooding or erosion problems along urban streams using methods that preserve and enhance the natural environment.

Q. Will the USRP fund trail access projects?

A. A project funded through the USRP must have flood management, erosion control, or environmental restoration as its main objective, but may include some trail work.

Q. We need to monitor our project for post-implementation success. Would this grant program fund monitoring?

A. Initial monitoring of the project, including plant establishment, adaptive management, and project assessment are eligible for the first 1-3 years of initial project construction. Monitoring requirements that extend beyond the project performance period established in the Grant will have to be covered through in-kind and/or volunteer support.

Q. What are the permitting requirements?

A. Specific permitting requirements are dependent upon the proposed project scope. To assist applicants, Exhibit 7 to the PSP provides a list of potential permits and approvals that may be required for a project. Grantees are responsible for all relevant permits, authorizations, and/or approvals that must be obtained prior to commencing work on a project. If any of the permits for the project have been completed prior to applying, **please include copies in your application on GRanTS.**

Q: Are costs directly related to the grant project, but incurred prior to the project award date eligible for reimbursement?

A: The USRP regulations allow the Department of Water Resources, at its discretion, to reimburse eligible project costs incurred prior to applying for or entering into a contract for grant funding. However, applicants incur these costs at their own risk and would need to provide justification for reimbursement if selected for funding.

Q: Can USRP funds be used to pay for overhead charges related to the project?

A: Some overhead expenses are eligible for reimbursement and may be included as a project cost, dependent on the complexity of the project preparation, planning, coordination, construction, etc. See pages 10, 30, and Exhibit 11 of the PSP for further information.

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Q: Can I submit an application to both acquire and develop the same piece of property?

A: Acquisition projects must have an implementation component as well.

Q. Would USRP fund park acquisitions?

A. Land acquisitions funded by the USRP are for the purpose of securing stream and floodplain areas that, if either left undeveloped or restored, will reduce or eliminate flooding events in the surrounding community. If the property in question will serve as both a seasonal parkway and a floodplain area during high water events, USRP will consider a land acquisition.

Q. Would the Program fund easements as well as Fee Title property acquisitions?

A. Yes, USRP can fund conservation easements.

Q. For a property acquisition, who should the new landowner or easement holder be?

A. Generally, the local agency sponsor. However, in some cases the property could transfer to a non-profit organization, citizen's group or another agency.

Q: Must the applicant have site control/land tenure to be eligible?

A: The applicant should obtain signed letters from the property owners which demonstrate knowledge and support of the proposed project and allows the grantees to access, implement, and operate and maintain the project (if necessary).

Q. Is an application without a resolution from both from the Sponsor and Co-sponsor considered ineligible?

A: If the resolution cannot be drawn up and adopted before the application is due, a letter of intent will be accepted until the resolution can be submitted. This letter should be signed by a mayor or city manager, if a city is applying; a chairperson of the board of supervisors, if a county is applying; or the manager or director, if a water district or agency is applying. If one of these people is not available, the signature of a designated staff person or assistant will be accepted. The letter must state support for the project, accept responsibility for compliance with CEQA, and state when the resolution will be sent to DWR. If a citizens' group is applying a letter of intent signed by the authorized representative will be accepted.